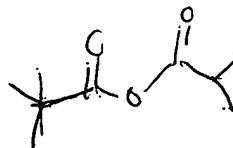


Fr 4/16/2003



4/15/2004

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Do Mark Sam

97-123
Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process ~~Process~~ for the manufacture of isobutyric anhydride, comprising by reacting acetic anhydride with isobutyric acid, and distilling the acetic acid generated as it is formed, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the reactor is initially loaded with at least a portion of one of the reagents and a portion of the other such that one reagent is the reagents ~~are~~ in an excess molar ratio relative to the stoichiometry of one of the other reagent reagents, and the reaction is carried out while adding the remainder of the reagent reagents as the reaction progresses and according to space volume ~~the place left free~~ in the reactor by the distillation of the acetic acid produced by the reaction, until a ~~the~~ desired overall molar ratio of the reagents is reached.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the totality of one of the reagents and a portion of the second are initially loaded.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the overall isobutyric acid/acetic anhydride molar ratio is between 0.5 and 5.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 3, wherein the desired molar ratio is an ~~characterized in that the~~ overall isobutyric acid/acetic anhydride molar ratio is between 1.5 and 2.2.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, having an ~~characterized in that the~~ initial isobutyric acid/acetic anhydride or acetic anhydride ~~anhydride/isobutyric acid~~ molar ratio is between 0.2 and 1.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, characterized in that the reaction is performed in a stirred reactor surmounted by a distillation column whose efficiency is at least 8 theoretical plates.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that the reaction is performed at a temperature of 70 to 150°C, preferably of 100 to 120°C.~~

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that the reaction is performed at a pressure of between 5.33×10^4 Pa (400 mmHg) and 0.67×10^4 Pa (50 mmHg).~~

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ ~~characterized in that the desired~~ temperature at the top of the column is adjusted according to the pressure so as to correspond to the temperature for distillation of the acetic acid during the whole reaction.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, further comprising purifying ~~characterized in that after completion of the reaction, the crude isobutyric anhydride material is purified by distilling the excess acetic anhydride and the residual mixed anhydride.~~

Please add the following new claim:

--Claim 11 (New) The process according to Claim 1, performed at a temperature of 100 to 120°C.--